Consciousness is the only 'capital' that a sentient being has born with.

Shri Maharaj comes out with this statement quite often. Indeed he says, this is only the apparent position, and that the real situation is that what is born is consciousness but that it needs a base, an organism to manifest itself, and that is the physical body.

What is it that gives sentience - capacity to feel sensation, to respond to stimulus - to a sentient being? What is it that distinguishes a person who is "alive" from one who is "dead"? It is, of course, the sense of BEING, the knowledge that one exists, - consciousness, the animus which animates the physical construct of the body.

It is consciousness that makes an individual come into apparent existence when it comes into manifestation and becomes identified with each individual form. It is then that the concept of 'I' arises in human beings. In each individual, the absolute gets reflected as awareness, and pure awareness becomes self-awareness.

Consciousness, it must be clearly understood, is a contact, a reflection of the absolute against the surface of matter, bringing about a sense of duality, whilst pure awareness, the absolute state is without beginning and end, without the need of any support. Awareness becomes consciousness when it has an object. Between pure awareness and awareness reflected in consciousness is a gap which, Shri Maharaj says, the mind cannot cross; the reflection of the sun in a drop of dew is not the sun.

Manifested consciousness is time-bound inasmuch as it will disappear as soon as its physical construct comes to an end. Nevertheless says Shri Maharaj, that is the only 'capital' a sentient being has. That is his God, that is his Atma, that is indeed the Maha Maaya. And that being his only instrument by which connection with the absolute, the only way he can

* The objective universe is in ~~const~~ continuous movement projecting and dissolving innumerable forms. Whenever a form is ~~get~~ created and is infused with life (Praana), consciousness (Chetanaa) appears, simultaneously and automatically, by the reflection of the Absolute awareness in matter

get the illusory ~~human~~ liberation for the illusory individual ~~to~~ by being one with his consciousness, and treating this ego-personal principle as the highest God. What is the ~~nature~~ substance of this animating consciousness? It is obviously physical material because in the absence of the physical form, it ~~will also~~ cannot survive ~~remain extant but merge in the universal consciousness.~~ Manifested consciousness can exist only so long as the food-body is kept in a reasonably healthy condition by food (and water) and medicine. To that extent one might say that although consciousness is the reflection of the awareness of reality, it is time-bound and can only be sustained by the food material provided by the five elements. The reflection of the sun will remain only so long as the drop of dew remains clear.

Shri Maharaj often tells us that we can observe the nature and function of the consciousness in the daily example of the waking, sleeping and dreaming states. In deep sleep consciousness goes into a much needed rest, and, during this absence of consciousness, there is no sense of one's existence, let alone the existence of any world and its inhabitants, or any ideas of bondage or liberation. This is so because the very concept of an 'I' is absent. Then at some moment, consciousness begins to stir — yet one is not fully awake — and then in a split-second in that speck of consciousness is created a world of mountains and hills, rivers and valleys, big cities and villages that are not bright and shiny as new ones just created, but which are many years old; there are also buildings and inhabitants of various ages, INCLUDING THE DREAMER; and what is more, the dreamer has no control over what the dreamed figures are doing! In other words, an entire living world has been created in a split second, built out of memory and imagination, merely by a single movement in that speck of consciousness. Imagine, therefore, says Shri Maharaj, the extra-ordinary power of this consciousness, a mere speck of which can contain an entire world. When the dreamer awakes, the dream world and the dreamed figures disappear.

What happens when the deep sleep is

over and so also the dream state, and consciousness again takes over. The immediate sense then is that of existence and presence, as such, not the presence of any particular individual. That first instant, in other words, is the sense not that 'I' am, or 'I' exist, but that of Presence in general. Later on, of course, the mind takes over and creates the body and the 'I' concept.

Shri Maharaj tells us repeatedly that one is so accustomed to thinking of oneself as a body having consciousness that one finds it difficult to accept and appreciate the actual position: it is consciousness which manifests itself in different innumerable bodies. Shri Maharaj, therefore, explains that it is essential to realise that birth and death are but the beginning and the ending of a stream of movements in consciousness, interpreted as events in time and space, and that the ocean of consciousness is infinite and eternal. Then you will realise that you are PURE BEING - Awareness - BLISS, and that in your original pristine state, and that when in touch with consciousness, you are only the witness - and totally apart from - of the various movements in consciousness.